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AUTHOR Csokasy, David
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ABSTRACT

The School of Technical and Applied Arts at Ferris State College has developed a series of activities that have proven to be successful in maintaining an up-to-date faculty, thereby insuring quality instruction. Recognizing that the problem of keeping faculty current in both teaching skills and technical knowledge was multi-faceted and could not be solved by any single action, the school chose a triadic approach. The first component is a model Masters' degree program offered on campus by Michigan State University. The college pays most of the cost of the courses in order to encourage its instructors to earn Masters' degrees and to learn more about teaching and curriculum preparation. The Master's program includes courses in education and in the instructor's special area, as well as an indepth study of mutual benefit to teacher and college. The second component of the professional development program is a faculty enrichment program with industry. This program allows faculty members to do a six-week internship at the Prince Corporation, a manufacturer of die cast machinery and plastic components. This program, in which the faculty member works a 40-hour week, allows the teacher to renew technical skills and business knowledge and to catch up with technological development in industry. The third component of the staff development program is an in-house seminar for new faculty members. This two-quarter class attempts to help new faculty learn to survive in the academic environment and to impart teaching skills. The Ferris program establishes the basics for a sound professional development program. (KC)

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Professional Development - A Success Story

Dr. David Csokasy
Program Director
School of Technical and Applied Arts
Ferris State College
Big Rapids, MI 49307

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The School of Technical and Applied Arts (T&AA) at Ferris State College has developed a series of activities that have proven to be very successful in assisting that school in maintaining an up-to-date faculty thereby insuring quality instruction. Recognizing that the problems of keeping faculty current in both teaching skills and technical knowledge was multi faceted and could not be solved by any single action, the school choose a triadic approach. The three components include, 1) A model Masters' degree program offered on campus by a major university, 2) A faculty enrichment program with industry, and 3) An in-house seminar for new faculty.

Many colleges and universities today are faced with the dilemma of an aging and stagnating faculty. This situation has forced them to seek innovative ways to maintain their quality as well as to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing technological society. As Jerry Gaff (1980) states in Toward Faculty Renewal, "It is becoming apparent that in the years ahead, colleges and universities will have to rely on their current faculty members to provide fresh perspectives, infuse new ideas, and give leadership to innovative programs if they are to maintain vigorous educational climates" (p.1-2).

Vocational educators are faced with a two fold predicament concerning professional development since they not only must remain pedagocially competent but must attempt to keep abreast of rapidly changing technology as well. This second aspect is especially critical to those who must prepare

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students for entry into today's technologically driven industrial job market. These issues are succinctly questioned in the article, Revitalization for Technical Educators.

> How can a technical educator best keep abreast of current technological changes and advances? How does a teacher of a specific technology keep current in his or her respective field while at the same time maintaining a responsible, accountable posture in the classroom? (Aug. 1980, 7)

While the need for professional development activities may be more accute today, the problem has been around for a long time. Through the years a wide variety of development activities have been established, many of which are widely used by vocational educators. These would include, but are not limited to, the following:

Advisory committees
Conventions
Course work at colleges and universities
Industrial leaves
Industry seminars and workshops
Research activities
Sabbatical leave
Travel/visitations to industry

While the needs of every college/university are different, enough similarities exist to make it worthwhile to observe the actions of those who have made in-roads with specific professional development plans.

To better understand the magnitude of the Ferris State College's concern regarding professional development it would be helpful to understand the size and complexity of their operation. The School of T&AA has approximately 2,300 full-time students enrolled in over 30 Certificate, Associate and Baccalaureate level technology programs. The 114 faculty members are divided throughout the five departments that compose the school: 1) Automotive, 2) Construction, 3) Electronics, 4) Graphic Arts, and 5) Industrial. While all faculty within the School of T&AA have strong industrial backgrounds including many years of work experience, some may have little or no academic

preparation.

Model Masters' Degree Program

A primary area of concern within the School of T&AA was for the improvement of the teaching skills of those faculty members who have been in the school for a considerable length of time. Many of these individuals were interested in some type of masters' level programming that was relevant to their needs as post-secondary technical instructors. Sixty five (57%) of them had less than a Masters' degree.

In an effort to satisy this need, a exemplary program was developed jointly by Ferris State College and Michigan State University. This special on campus masters level program in vocational-technical education was designed to prepare the post-secondary industrial/vocational teacher with a professional background and technical updating by advancement through a selected series of courses. The program consists of three parts: Professional core, technical electives, and an in-depth study.

The professional core is designed to assist the technical teacher to better communicate his/her competencies in the classroom. A total of 24 credits is required in this section and includes the following courses:

1. Learning theory elective.
2. Curriculum elective.
3. Foundations elective.
4. Organization and management of shops.
5. Curriculum construction in industrial education.
6. Current issues and development in occupational education.
7. Instructional materials in vocational education.
8. Evaluation of programs of vocational education.

The technical electives section is designed to allow the technical

educator to update or advance his/her skills in their technical speciality area. A total of nine credits is required in this area and would usually be divided into either a series of independent studies or coursework in related areas. Independent study may include industrial interships, industrial schools/workshops, indepth study or other appropriate activity. Coursework would include regular collegiate level classes in Engineering, Mathematics, Physics or other related areas.

The in-depth study core is designed to allow the technical teacher to do an in-depth study in an area of mutual interests to the institution and the instructor. A total of 12 credits is involved in this section. The two major areas involved in this section would be: 1) Indepth study such as curricular development of research into a new technological area or, 2) A masters level thesis.

In order to assist the faculty members academic advisor in determining the appropriateness of seminars used for independent studies, topics of indepth study and general degree concerns, a professional development committee was established. The committee is composed of School of T&AA members as well s the faculty advisors from Michigan State University. The committee serves in an advisory capacity with final determination of projects left to the academic advisor.

Ferris State College feels a major committment to this activity to the extent that nearly all costs are covered by the institution. At the present time, graduate tuition at Michigan State University costs $50 a term hour or $150 per three hour course. For each class taken a Ferris faculty person pays a flat $35 and purchases required textbooks. As an incentive, the college pays the remainder of the tuition costs from its general fund. Another major incentive is that all courses, with the exception of specialized Engineering,

Mathematics or other related courses, are offered on the Ferris campus which eliminates a four hour round trip drive to the Michigan State campus. The institution will also assist faculty with travel related costs involved with independent studies.

Successful completion of the Masters' degree will bring the faculty member a $500 contractural pay increase. The institution has guaranteed automatic promotion to assistant professor to anyone holding the rank of technical instructor. This benefit is outside of the contractural agreement which further exemplifies the institutional commitment to their program.

Recently, Michigan State and Ferris State have negotiated a series of doctoral level courses to be offered on campus for those faculty who wish to begin post graduate coursework. While the institution has no monetary commitment to this program, they have been involved in coordinating delivery, providing rooms and advising space, fulfilling all registration activities, providing campus mailing services to MSU advisors and encouraging interested Ferris faculty to participate.

Faculty Enrichment Program with Industry

The Prince Corporation of Holland, Michigan, a major manufacturer of die cast machinery and plastic components has been a strong supporter of Ferris State College through the years including the hiring of many graduates. In 1978 a new cooperative program was developed with Prince whereby faculty from the School of T&AA would spend a six week period of time working in the "real world" of a Prince manufacturing facility. Three objectives for the program were jointly developed.

OBJECTIVE:

1. To renew and further develope the knowledge and skills required for effective instruction in an industrial program through direct exposure to an industrial environment.

2. To further develope the understanding of corporate structure; the role each trade or professional plays in working together to earn a profit.

3. To provide exposure to some of the most recent technological developments in industry.

A program of work is developed by Prince Corporation including involvement in a variety of technical areas based upon the instructors major area of instruction and the existing requirements of Prince Corporation. Faculty are treated like salaried employees and work a regular 40 hour week.

Faculty who participate in this program receive a stipend from the college which is largely offset by a donation from the Prince Corporation. Since the company is located several hours from Ferris State College, participating faculty arrange for housing in the area. House trailers, motels and dormitories at a local college have all been utilized for housing. Some faculty take their spouses with them and use the experience as a form of extended summer vacation since Holland is situated on the shores of Lake Michigan.

Faculty selection is critical to the success of such an operation. Interested faculty submit a resume, letter of interest and an outline of the activities in which they would like to become involved. Final selection is left up to the corporation and is based upon their needs at the time. To-date, faculty from the plastics engineering technology, machine tool technology, and technical drafting and tool design curriculums have been involved.

Schools that would like to establish such an operation should consider the following points: 1) Utilize a company large enough to offer a diversity of experiences, 2) Seek a company that has a large number of graduates of your programs, 3) A non-union shop is more likely to provide mobility

required to provide a diversity of relevant "hands-on" experience, and 4) There must be a committment from the upper administration of the industrial organization and the educational institution.

The benefits of such a program for the college include:

1. Technically up-to-date faculty.
2. Curricular changes based upon current industrial needs.
3. Exposure of faculty to real business problems.
4. Possibilities for consulting and training seminars to be presented at the company.

The Benefits of Such a Program for the Corporation Include:

1. Technically up-to-date graduates for their workforce.
2. An "in" is established for recruitment.
3. Strong public relations possibilities.
4. Tax write-off for college donations.
5. An "in" with the college setting for possible future research or training needs.
6. Possible in-house problem solving by the faculty member during the program.

In House Seminar for New Faculty

While a new faculty member to the School of T&AA is hired primarily for his/her technical expertise and experience he/she is expected to become a strong teacher in a short span of time. To assist new faculty in becoming competent instructors, the School of T&AA requires all new instructors to participate in a special two quarter sequence of inservice programming.

The first semester program is designed on the seminar format and meets on a bi-weekly basis. Topics of discussion are related to the immediate needs of the new faculty members and are of an orientation to teaching/orientation to

college nature. Examples of topics would include, ordering A-V equipment, academic warnings, textbook ordering, final grades and campus mail procedures.

The second semester program is based upon a special collegiate level course conducted in cooperation with Ferris' School of Education. The course is entitled "Introduction to Teaching Occupational Courses" and meets for 20 hours during the quarter (2 hours per week x 10 weeks). The purpose of the course is to provide an overview of the essential skills utilized by successful instructors of occupational courses. Course objectives are established so that upon completion of the course the new faculty member would be able to:

1. Develop simple curricular material including course summary sheets, course outlines, and lesson plans.
2. Select and utilize appropriate teaching methods.
3. Develop basic audio visual material.
4. Utilize basic audio visual equipment.
5. Develop basic evaluation devices.
6. Assist students with academic problems.

The final piece of the special sessions for new faculty members includes a "Course Reaction Survey". This survey is completed by all students in every class taught by the new faculty member. The topics rated by students include: 1) Mastery of Subject Matter, 2) Organization of Course, 3) Clarity of Presentation, 4) Stimulation of Interest, 5) Availability for Assistance, 6) Impartiality on Grades and Examinations, 7) Concern for Student, and 8) Overall Quality of Instruction. At the present time, this procedure continues until the individual receives tenure. The data is utilized by the schools' program director to work with new faculty members in improving their instructional expertise.

Keeping a post-secondary technical faculty pedagogically and technologically competent is a major concern of vocational administrators. While the Ferris program is not the answer to everyones problems, it goes a long way to establish the basics for a sound professional development program.

Graff, J. Toward Faculty Renewal. San Francisco, CA: Jossey - Bass, 1975

Revitalization for Technical Educators. Training and Development Journal, August, 1980, 34(8),7.